

University of Missouri Extension Community Development Program



OSEDA data, including county profiles, help communities look at their assets and plan for the future.

Noted nationally as one of the premier extension programs in community development, we draw on the research, teaching, and extension expertise of several colleges and campuses within the university. Central to our mission is our focus on community as a building block of society, fostering meaningful public participation and inclusion, enhancing local leadership and decision-making capacity, and helping communities achieve the goals and results they establish for themselves.

Successful community development engages communities in learning, organizing, and acting in ways that empower local people to influence the future of their community through democratic means. As we help communities shape their future, we are adding value to Missouri communities in a number of ways. Over 6,770 youth and adults have graduated from the EXCEL (Experience in Community Enterprise and Leadership) Program since 1984. Community development program participants have strengthened the economic base and preserved the character, quality, and culture of their neighborhoods and communities. Numerous communities and groups have developed effective ordinances and plans for dealing with contentious issues as a result of planning, public dialog, and other facilitated methods to purposefully involve and empower local residents in public issues.

Our business is working collaboratively with communities to improve their ability function effectively and serve the needs of those who live, work, play, and visit there. Therefore, we assist in the facilitation of processes to deal successfully with a host of issues and improve the quality of communities, leadership, and local government. To do so, we facilitate dialog and planning processes and provide education and training. We develop, integrate, and test new knowledge that integrates theory, research, policy, and practice. We collaborate with others that share an interest or commitment to community-driven development.

Our broad realm of expertise includes community leadership, community economics, community organizing and organizational development, community decision-making support, public participation, community planning, facilitation, conflict resolution, community dialog and deliberation, community emergency management, urban and rural development, and work with Latino and Hispanic communities.

Current Program Efforts

These are grouped in the following broad category areas with a few examples:

- Building Inclusive Communities—*Examples: Community Development Academy, Alianzas (working with communities and Hispanic/Latino populations), community organizational development*
- Community Decision Making and Governance—*Examples: conflict resolution and community deliberation, community decision support through the work of OSEDA and the Community Policy Analysis Center, participatory community and economic planning, CECH-Up (local government education for middle school)*
- Community Leadership Development—*Examples: EXCEL, Youth EXCEL, Neighborhood Leadership Academy*
- Community Emergency Management
- Watershed Planning, Management & Education

Trends Impacting Missouri Communities

The future of a community is closely tied to building a critical mass of community leaders for the future.

- The seven pillars of a healthy community include practicing ongoing dialog; generating leadership; shaping its future; embracing diversity; knowing itself; connecting people and resources, and creating a sense of community. *Source: Association for Healthy Cities and Communities*
- Fostering critical new leadership voices among youth, elderly, new immigrants and low-income is occurring through the development of Community Leadership Development Organizations because they are located in communities and are more responsive to local needs. These organizations provide leadership learning opportunities to groups of emerging leaders who live and work in those communities, often around a pressing issue or for a particular constituency. *Source: Engaging New Leadership Voices for Catalyzing and Sustaining Community Change, Kellogg Foundation*

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- accessible education for:
- economic viability
- empowered individuals
- strong families and communities
- healthy environments

New strategies for development are emerging.

Community economic development strategies require a new way of thinking that:

- Focuses on the people and their skills in the area as the source for economic stability and growth (as opposed to recruitment of industry).
- Measures success on the basis of the quality of community, quality jobs created and ability to provide decent living.
- Focuses on working with the whole community and building systems of support for community enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Focuses on working as a region for place-based development rooted in the local culture, heritage, nature tourism, and multi-community, multi-organizational, and public-private collaboration.

50% of local development and elected officials believe their region should pursue the development of a diversified regional economy. They do not agree on the appropriate targeted strategies for development such as prisons, gaming/gambling, agriculture, “big-box development”(such as Wal-Mart complexes), retiree and baby-boomer attraction, redevelopment of Brownfields. *Source: EForum: The Pulse of Small Town and Rural America, NADO Research Foundation, 2004*

50% say their region has insufficient access to high-speed broadband to develop, sustain, and expand businesses. *Source: EForum: The Pulse of Small Town and Rural America, NADO Research Foundation, 2004*

Local governments are struggling with increasing pressures and demands.

Federal and state governments are shifting more funding responsibilities for social service and economic assistance to local governments.

- 81% local officials rate unfunded federal mandates as a significant concern for local governments. *Source: EForum: The Pulse of Small Town and Rural America, NADO Research Foundation, 2004*

- 50% say they are pursuing a regional approach to homeland security preparedness, which represents a low margin considering benefits of cross-jurisdictional collaboration. *Source: EForum: The Pulse of Small Town and Rural America, NADO Research Foundation, 2004*
- Nationally 72% of counties are facing budget shortfalls. 56% of counties are facing reductions in state funding for state-mandated programs. 37% of counties facing state reductions will reduce services, and 17% of counties will increase taxes. *Source: Counties in Crisis, National Association of Counties, 2003*
- In Missouri, the state government has shifted more responsibility to local and non-government entities through its cuts the past five years in such services.

Community emergency preparedness is critical.

Missouri experiences at least 10 significant emergencies such as floods, ice storms, and tornadoes each year. During the last three years, between 40 and 70 counties have experienced federally declared disasters. However, numerous local natural disasters occur frequently throughout the year and without warning. After disasters, Extension is called on regularly by SEMA to facilitate unmet-needs committees and Community Organizations Assisting in Disaster. *Source: Missouri Fire Rescue and Training Institute, 2005*

Public issues are more complex, contentious, and interconnected.

Land use, methamphetamine production and use, environment, economic and biotech development, homelessness, addressing health care issues, the widening gap between haves and have-nots, and many more issues cross jurisdictional, political, and social boundaries. Many public issues are intractable, “wicked” problems with only temporary and imperfect resolutions. They lack well-defined technical definitions and solutions and clear-cut criteria to judge their resolution. Local officials are acknowledging the need for public engagement in resolving issues facing their communities, and communities are turning to increased public participation in decision-making processes to gain public ownership and input. *Source: Nalbandian, 1999*